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STUDIES IN ANCIENT ART AND CIVILIZATION, VOL. 21 (2017)
pp. 119-141, https://doi.org/10.12797/SAAC.21.2017.21.07

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WHEN DID POMPEY THE GREAT ENGAGE IN HIS *IMITATIO ALEXANDRI*?

Abstract: The aim of this article is to revisit the issue of Pompey the Great's imitatio Alexandri, especially the timetable for its beginnings and development. Previous studies of the subject have indicated that either the Roman general was involved in imitating the Macedonian king since his youth, or he did not do so at all. Meanwhile, this article presents evidence indicating that the most likely scenario implies that the image of Pompey as the Roman Alexander was created during his eastern campaign against Mithridates. Moreover, it was probably Theophanes of Mytilene, Pompey's friend and trusted advisor, who developed this theme. Additionally, there is evidence indicating that Pompey tried to limit the use of imitatio Alexandri primarily to the eastern parts of the Roman Empire, fearing that an ambiguous perception of Alexander in Rome would harm his image.

Keywords: imitatio Alexandri; Pompey the Great; Roman Republic; Roman politics; propaganda

Introduction

Alexander the Great is one of history's most recognizable figures. In the Hellenistic era his superhuman achievements made him a point of reference for philosophers trying to create a description of the ideal ruler. He was also a role-model for kings wanting to be perceived as his successors (cf. Stewart 1993). The Romans, who began to interfere with the affairs of the Hellenistic world at the turn of the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC,[1]

[1] All the dates are BC unless stated otherwise.

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met with the myth of Alexander already ingrained in social consciousness of the Greeks and other inhabitants of the eastern regions of the Mediterranean. This, along with the deep distrust of monarchy among the Romans, created a kind of dissonance. The Roman politicians both craved royal honours and feared them. At the same time, the Greeks knew no other way to honour their new 'protectors'. Alexander's achievements fascinated the Romans, especially their leaders. However, the attitude toward Alexander was not unequivocally positive during the Roman Republic. He was sometimes also perceived negatively as a tyrant, especially in philosophical writings (Kühnen 2008, 16). Comparing oneself to Alexander could be met with accusations of striving for autocracy. These kinds of allegations were popular in Roman Republican politics and could be devastating for a political career. Therefore, any *imitatio Alexandri* had to be managed carefully.

The subject of Pompey's *imitatio Alexandri* has been already studied by several scholars (cf. Michel 1967; Weippert 1972; Dreizehnter 1975; Badian 1976; Green 1978; Gruen 1998; Martin 1998; Kühnen 2008). The vast majority of them believe that the general imitated Alexander.[2] Some scholars (Dreizehnter 1975, 213; Badian 1976, 216) are even of the opinion that Pompey was the first Roman involved in the *imitatio Alexandri*. Those who share this conclusion exclude the possibility of this kind of relationship between the king and Scipio Africanus or Scipio Aemilianus. It is believed that both generals were not imitating the Macedonian king but in their cases only the *comparatio Alexandri* was made by ancient authors (Kühnen 2008, 16).

The definition

Considering that the term *imitatio Alexandri* can be variously understood, it is necessary to define it. Generally, this term is used to name two different phenomena. The first involves comparing a figure to Alexander the Great and the expression of ancient authors' opinions that this figure imitated the Macedonian king. The second is based on ancient sources notifying activities related to the *imitatio Alexandri* undertaken by the figure himself (Kühnen 2008, 16). The first understanding – i.e. the one postulated by the third party, usually an ancient writer – should not be treated as *imitatio*. Instead, the term *comparatio* should be used (Green 1978, 1-26). Therefore, we deal with a 'real' *imitatio* only when a person of interest, and not an ancient author, referred to Alexander the Great and imitated him.

[2] Except from Gruen 1998, 178-191 and Martin 1998, 23-51.

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In cases where there is any evidence of a competition with the achievements of Alexander, we should rather use the term *aemulatio*. This distinction seems obvious; however, in reality the condition of source material is frequently inadequate to unambiguously determine which form we are dealing with.

To recognize measures undertaken as *imitatio Alexandri* the imitator should utilize in his personal branding several issues associated with the king. He should refer to:

1. Alexander's names and titles,
2. his physiognomy, dress, hairstyles,
3. gestures and posture visible in the sculptural portraits of the king,
4. symbols of power (the diadem, purple, etc.),
5. symbols of Alexander's apotheosis (lion's skin, bull's horn, thunder, aegis, elephant's scalp, astral symbols).
6. founding cities and naming them after himself or in a manner referring to one's accomplishments (Michel 1967, 13; Dreizehnter 1975, 213).

The tendency to imitate, compete with or compare oneself to Alexander resulted from a desire to equal his extraordinary deeds and be held in the same esteem as the king was in the Hellenistic period. He became an epitome of the ideal ruler soon after his death. Greek philosophers equated him with Heracles in their political writings as early as the 4th century. Like the hero, Alexander became the embodiment of the four basic virtues required of a good king: *philantropia* (*φιλανθρωπία*), *eunoia* (*εὔνοια*), *euergesia* (*εὐεργεσία*) and *praotes* (*πρᾳότης*). These virtues defined the way of conduct of an ideal ruler. First, he was obliged to defend Greek culture and to propagate it among barbarians (*philantropia*). Second, he should be just and gracious with respect to his subjects (*eunoia*). Third, he was obliged to found new cities and public buildings (*euergesia*). Fourth, he had to fight the barbarians, if necessary (*praotes*) (Antela-Bernárdez 2006, 34).

The evidence for Pompey's *imitatio Alexandri*

The thesis of Pompey's involvement in *imitatio Alexandri* is supported by written sources. First, there is Plutarch's mention of a physical resemblance between Pompey and Alexander (Plut. *Vit.Pomp*. 2.1). This remark, however, should be regarded more as the evidence for *comparatio*, especially since Alexander was Plurarch's point of reference. Moreover, the Greek author clearly stated that it was just an opinion, not a fact. A remark by Sallust (*Hist*. 3.88), Pompey's contemporary, is not so easy to dismiss; the Roman historian wrote that Pompey had been compared to Alexander by flatterers

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since his youth. As a result, he began to imitate (*imitatio*) the king and finally to compete (*aemulatio*) with him. According to Plutarch (*Vit.Pomp*. 2.1), Pompey's opponents quickly realised that and began to mock the general by comparing him to Alexander. It seems that Pompey stopped imitating the king as a consequence. He returned to this practice several years later during his eastern campaign. However, there is also a possibility that Pompey's *imitatio Alexandri* was not simply revived but created in the East. In this case Theophanes of Mytilene should be regarded as its promotor. Sallust's remarks are the sole solid evidence against this thesis. However, we must remember that despite being one of the leading Roman historians, he did tend to mix chronologies of events (Syme 1964, 69-81).

Cognomen Magnus

Pompey's by-name, *Magnus*, is one of the issues broadly discussed regarding his *imitatio Alexandri*. Most scholars assume that the selection of the *cognomen Magnus* was a conscious reference to the king. It even has been speculated that Pompey might have considered adopting the by-name Alexander (Kühnen 2008, 57), despite a complete lack of evidence in the source material to support it.

It is worth emphasising that the Greeks generally did not use the by-name *Magnus* when referring to Alexander. The very name of the king was regarded as synonymous with greatness. Even in the cases when *Magnus* appears in the inscriptions of Demetrius Poliorcetes (Kyparissis and Peek 1941, 221-227) and Antiochus the Great (cf. Michel 1967, 35; Kühnen 2008, 57-58) it is not clear whether it was meant as a by-name or not. It seems that at least in the case of Antiochus' inscription it referred to the Persian title of king of kings, usually translated into Greek as *βασιλεύσ μέγας* (Michel 1967, 35). It appears that the association of the name of Alexander with the by-name Magnus/Megas was established in Rome. The first traces come from Plautus' comedy *Mostellaria* (Plaut. *Mostell*. 775-776) dated to the turn of the 3rd and 2nd centuries. At the time *Magnus* was not associated exclusively with Alexander. *Fasti consulares* are good evidence of that. Under the year 148 we notice Postumius Albinus Magnus. The by-name *Magnus* was used here to distinguish him from the consul of 174, Postumius Albinus Paullulus (Michel 1967, 36; Kühnen 2008, 57-58).

Several different opinions regarding the time and context in which Pompey received his by-name are expressed in the written sources. Plutarch (*Vit.Pomp*. 13.3-5) and Dio Cassius (30-35.107.1) reported that it had been given to him by his soldiers in Africa or by Sulla shortly after his return to

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Rome. Appian noted as many as three different versions. First, he recorded that Pompey had been named 'Magnus' by Sulla (App. *BCiv*. 1.80.366). Then he reported that it had happened only after the war with Mithridates (App. *BCiv*. 2.91.384). Finally, summarizing Pompey's life, he stated that the general '(…) *had successfully carried on the greatest wars and had made the greatest additions to the empire of the Romans, and had acquired by that means the title of great.*' (App. *BCiv*. 2.86.363).[3] Cassiodorus (*Var*. 4.51.12), instead, reported that Pompey had been named Magnus after the inauguration of his Theatre in Rome. Despite the differences, the three main sources (Plutarch, Appian and Dio Cassius) indicate that the bestowal of the title took place during or shortly after Pompey's African campaign.

The question whether soldiers or Sulla referred to Alexander when naming Pompey or not becomes another important issue in this context. The young age of the successful general favoured this kind of comparisons (Kühnen 2008, 58; Martin 1998, 35), especially if it was true that he had looked up to Alexander since his youth (Spranger 1958, 38). It is worth mentioning that in Africa Pompey did not only fight the enemies but also spent some time hunting (Plut. *Vit.Pomp*. 12.5). This could have also been seen as a reference to Alexander (Michel 1967, 37).

Other questions regarding Pompey's by-name are: when exactly did he begin to use it and when was it publicly accepted for the first time? According to Plutarch (*Vit.Pomp*. 13.5) he started to sign his letters as *Pompeius Magnus* in the course of the Sertorian War. The same author reported that the by-name had been used for the first time by the censors during the *census equitum* in 70 (Plut. *Vit.Pomp*. 22.4-6). Nevertheless, it seems that general acceptance did not come before the end of Pompey's Eastern campaign.[4] At that time Cicero started to use the *cognomen Magnus* in his writings (Cic. *Arch.* 24; Cic. *Fam*. 5.7). There are also plenty of inscriptions from the east dated to this period that refer to Pompey as *Magnos* or *Megas*[5].

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[3] Appian, *The Roman History*, trans. H. White, Harvard 1912-1913.

[4] Although there are some Latin inscriptions that are sometimes dated earlier: to the end of the Sertorian war: Tarraco: CIL.I^2.2964a (cf. Michel 1967, 47) and Clusium: CIL.I^2.768 (Amela Valverde 2001a, 98) or after the war with pirates: Rome: CIL.I^2.2710. However the dates are not certain.

[5] Argos: AE.1920.81; Delos: SIG^3.749A; Ilium: AE.1990.940; Magnesia ad Sipilum: SEG.XVII.525; Miletopolis: AE 1907.183; Mytilene: AE 1971.453, AE.1936.19, IG.XII.2.140-142, IG.XII.2.144-145; IG.XII.2.163-166; IG.XII.2.202, SIG^3.693; Iulis/Ceos: IG.XII.5.625; Philadelpheia: AE 1957.18; Samos: AE 1912.215; Side AE 1966.462; Soloi-Pompeiopolis: AE 1888.106; Chalium: SEG.XII.270.

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Physical resemblance

The next issue to be considered in the context of the *imitatio Alexandri* is a physical resemblance. Plutarch mentioned it but, as I have stated before, he clearly reported that it was an opinion of flatterers and not a fact. Scholars point, however, to a number of similarities between the portraits of Pompey and Alexander. The most noticeable being a characteristic hairstyle, i.e. *ἀναστολὴ* (Pl. 1: 1-2) (Michel 1967, 23; Kühnen 2008, 54). Moreover, Pompey's portraits imitated a peculiar tilt of the head present also in the portraits of Alexander (Michel 1967, 23; Kühnen 2008, 56). However, it is worth mentioning that some scholars reject the idea that it was a conscious reference to the Macedonian (cf. La Rocca 1987-1988, 273).

In the context of a postulated *imitatio Alexandri* in portrait, a question arises whether it was a direct wish of Pompey to be presented in this way or rather the result of the reception of his propaganda image as the Roman Alexander. The later seems more probable since Pompey had nothing to do with most, if not all, of the portraits preserved to our times.[6] It is even more so in the case of statues erected in his honour in the East that we know of only due to inscriptions.

While the tilted head was a simple form that might (or might not) have referred to the portraits of Alexander, the *ἀναστολὴ* brings more questions. Did Pompey really wear the hairstyle or was he only presented that way? If the former, was it meant to be a reference to the Macedonian, or was it pure coincidence? Finally, when did Pompey begin to wear the *ἀναστολὴ*? There is no way to answer first two questions. However, we can try to resolve the last one based on analysis of Pompey's portraits. It is believed that earliest portraits of the general that we have copies of were created in the 70s and so they show him as a man between 30 and 40 years of age. The earliest of them is perhaps the head in the Louvre that bears some resemblance to the portraits of the Sullan era (de Kersauson 1996, 43). In addition, there is a small terracotta head in Basel interpreted as a portrait of young Pompey (Trunk 2008, 152). If the identification and the date are correct, it would mean that Pompey presented himself as the Roman Alexander to the public before his eastern campaign. However, not all scholars are undoubtedly certain that the head in the Louvre is a depiction of Pompey (Junker 2007, 74). Moreover, the supposed age of the sitter is not a good indicator of

[6] Most of them is dated to the 1st century AD: cf. Schweitzer 1947, 63; Michel 1967, 65; Johansen 1977, 60, 63; Giuliani 1986, 56-58, 320 note 2; Boschung 1986, 274-275; Poulsen 1948, 10-11; Poulsen 1951, 404; de Kersauson 1996, 42). Although it is postulated that they were copies of the originals created at different points in Pompey's life.

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the chronology of one's portrait. In his study Junker (2007, 78-80) postulated that the style of the head from Venice is similar to the early portraits of Augustus and, therefore, was created after Pompey's death, probably in the late 30s-early 20s, and not in the 60s (Schweitzer 1947, 88; Buschor 1949, 44; Johansen 1977, 61-63; Giuliani 1986, 200, n. 4; La Rocca 1987-1988, 270). Similarly, the postulated sitter's age of the head in Paris does not necessarily indicate the time this type was sculpted. In fact, Junker (2007, 81), who based his study mainly on stylistic grounds, postulated that the earlier type of Pompey's portrait that has survived to our times was represented by the head in Copenhagen (Pl. 1: 1). Its original was probably created in the 50s (cf. Schweitzer 1947, 86-88, fig. 117; Buschor 1949, 44-46; Poulsen 1951, 404, pl. XLVIII; Michel 1967, 62-63; Giuliani 1986, 56-58; La Rocca 1987-1988, 271 Johansen 1994, 20, no. 1; Kühnen 2008, 56). If Juncker is right, the earliest Pompey portraits we have copies of belong to the 50s. Therefore, we cannot say much about the way he was portrayed earlier. There are no coin types bearing a portrait of Pompey minted during his lifetime. Such coins occurred only after his death and had been produced by his elder son Pompey the Younger (RRC 470) since late 47 or even the beginning of 46 (Tsirkin 1981, 99; Amela Valverde 2017, 61, 81-85; Kopij 2017, 160). Coins are not therefore of much help in resolving this question.

Pompey was the first Roman to be portrayed on gems on a large scale (Pl. 1: 3). Perhaps this should be also regarded as evidence for his *imitatio Alexandri,* especially as it is sometimes postulated that Pompey introduced this royal tradition to the Romans (Vollenweider 1955, 110). However, we cannot be certain exactly when these gems were created. It is possible that they were produced after Pompey's death in Sextus Pompey's camp or even later in imperial times. Unfortunately, the uncertainties regarding dating this category of artefacts result in their inability to help us establish a timetable of Pompey's *imitatio Alexandri* (Kopij 2017, 257-262).

Clothing and symbols of power

There is only one piece of evidence to suggest Pompey alluded to Alexander in clothing as well. The general wore a mantle considered to be a piece of the king's garment during his third triumph in 61 (App. *Mith*. 117.577). The mantle was a war trophy found in the treasury of Mithridates. Although its authenticity is questionable, it held considerable propaganda value. There is no doubt that Pompey wore it intentionally to present himself as Alexander's heir (Kühnen 2008, 70-71). Nonetheless, the mantle is

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the only symbol of the king's power used by Pompey in his propaganda. It is worth pointing out that Mithridates was known for his *imitatio Alexandri* (cf. Fulińska 2015).[7] The long-sought victory over the king of Pontus who opposed Rome for almost 30 years could have been a reason for adopting *imitatio Alexandri*. Especially since it meant defeating a man who presented himself as the new Alexander. Who could fill the role better than the 'real' new Alexander? No wonder that Pompey started to imitate the king and presented himself as his successor.

Pompey's propaganda also includes some references to Alexander's deification and its symbols. Some scholars (cf. Mader 2006, 397-403) believe that the first attempt of public manifestation of this kind of symbolism took place at the time of Pompey's first triumph. As described by Plutarch (*Vit.Pomp*. 14.4), during the preparations the general wanted his chariot to be pulled by four elephants. It turned out, however, that the *porta triumphalis* was not wide enough for the animals to pass through. He therefore had to abandon the idea and use ordinary horses. Although Mader (2006, 397-406) suggested the elephants were intended to be a reference to Alexander, it is more probable that it was just a reflection of young Pompey's insolence and a symbol of a victory over Africa. This kind of behaviour was characteristic of the culture of transgressing the boundaries of the *mos maiorum* expressed by leading Roman politicians of the Late Republic (Hölscher 2004).

It is also possible that Pompey's aureus bearing a female head with *exuviae elephantis* referred to Alexander (Pl. 1: 4). It is usually interpreted as the first personification of Africa in Roman art, although some scholars (Cesano 1942, 249; Amela Valverde 2001b, 2010) suggest that it was minted in the East during the final stages of the Mithridatic War and the figure on the obverse is thus in fact Alexander (Amela Valverde 2010). Unfortunately, we are unable to date the aureus in order to determine the meaning of its imagery. The context of minting gold coins in the Late Roman Republic suggests, however, that it was struck either during the war with Sertorius to overcome the scarcity of funds sent to Pompey's camp from Rome, or during the conflict with Caesar (Kopij 2016). In the second case it would refer to Alexander whether it bore the king's portrait or perhaps a personification of Asia as a symbol of the Eastern campaign.

City founder

The last position on the list presented at the beginning of this article states that only a figure that founded cities can be considered as Alexander's

[7] Especially pp. 172-178, also for additional bibliography.

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imitator. The ancients saw the king as a founder despite the fact that he probably had little to do with most of the cities he was supposed to have founded (cf. Welles 1965, 225; Kühnen 2008, 66-68). This kind of activity was perceived as godlike, and with the number of foundations attributed to Alexander he could compete only with Apollo, Heracles and Dionysos (Kühnen 2008, 65).

Pompey was extremely active in the field of city founding. Plutarch (*Vit.Pomp*. 45.2) counted as many as 39 cities founded by the general. From this figure we are able to verify a quarter of the foundations at most (Dreizehnter 1975, 215). The rest is most probably the result of Plutarch's imagination and desire to present Pompey as the Roman Alexander.

Pompey began founding cities during the Sertorian War. There is no doubt that he established *Pompaelo* (present-day Pamplona)[8] at that time (Pl. 2: 1). The town was an administrative centre of the territory inhabited by the *Vascones*. Its purpose was to guard one of two passages through the Pyrenees (Beltrán Lloris and Pina Polo 1994, 114-115; Amela Valverde 2002a, 166). The name Pompaelo was probably a local equivalent of Pompeiopolis and an amalgam of Pompey's name with the Vascon suffix *-ilu*, *-iru,* meaning town or settlement (Beltrán Lloris and Pina Polo 1994, 114; Amela Valverde 2000, 11). The choice of this place was probably dictated both by its strategic location and the fact that it was where Pompey established his winter camp (Dreizehnter 1975, 234-235). The town was meant to be one of the symbols of Pompey's victory and a counterweight to the Sertorian capital of Spain, Osca (Amela Valverde 2000, 12-14, 34-35).

There is also a possibility that Pompey established another town, *Gerunda* (present-day Girona). Its task was to control the *via Heraclea*. However, this case is not documented as well as that of Pompaelo (Amela Valverde 2000, 31-35; Amela Valverde 2002a, 97, 169-171, 173).

The inscription found in *Cupra Maritima* in *Picenum* dedicated to L. Afranius (*CIL* I^2 752, *CIL* IX 5275, *ILLRP* 385, *ILS* 878) may be considered evidence for Pompey's involvement in establishing a colony in Valencia. A large number of the *Sertorii* recorded in the epigraphic material from the area suggests that they might have been settled there by Pompey after the final victory over the Marians along with his own veterans (Brunt 1971, 591-592; Esteve Foriol 1978, 85-86; Amela Valverde 2001c, 66;

[8] Roldán Hervás 1972, 91; Ebel 1975, 369; Leach 1978, 53; Beltrán Lloris and Pina Polo 1994, 114-115; Ortiz de Zárate 1996, 169. Only Dreizehnter (1975, 233-234) doubts that Pompaelo was founded by Pompey. Mezquíriz Irujo (1966, 168) argues that no Republican material was found during the excavations in Pamplona and suggests that Pompey founded Pompaelo at different location.

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Amela Valverde 2002a, 97, 103, 176-181, 218). Although the results of archaeological works suggesting the *hiatus* between the destruction of the city ca. 75 and the times of Augustus (Ribera i Lacomba and Calvo Galvez 1995, 37-38, 40) contradict this thesis, we cannot exclude it, as the excavation did not cover the entire area of the city (Amela Valverde 2001c, 66-67). To ease this dissonance Pena Gimeno (1989, 307-309) suggested that the inscription refers to another town: Valentia in Transalpine Gaul.[9] In addition, Pena Gimeno argues that the residents of the city in the imperial times belonged to the *tribus Galeria*. This suggests that it was Augustus who established the colony, all the more so since there is no record of any *Pompeii* or *Afranii* in epigraphic material from the town. As well, the absence of Valencia from Strabo's work indicates that it was founded at a later point (Pena Gimeno 1989, 303-314). These arguments were challenged by Amela Valverde (2001c, 67-68). First, he suggested that the membership of the *tribus Galeria* indicates that Augustus did not necessarily create the colony but could have only reorganized and enlarged it. The omission of Strabo is not an obstacle because both he and Pliny overlooked several other important towns. The absence of the *Pompeii* and the *Afranii* is, in turn, a result of settling veterans that had already been Roman citizens and therefore bore other Roman names. Nevertheless, in the face of all uncertainties it is reasonable to exclude Valencia from the set of Pompey's foundations.

It is also possible that Pompey gave the Latin rights to several Spanish towns after the Sertorian War. The Vascon *Cascantum* may be one of them. It was created after the Celtiberian Wars to act as an administrative centre for the *Vascones,* who were meant to counterweight the Celtiberians. It was destroyed in 76 by Sertorius for helping Pompey and Metellus Pius, the other Roman commander-in-chief (Amela Valverde 2002a, 202-203). Remaining loyal to the Senate could result in rewarding its inhabitants with the Latin rights. However, most scholars argue that this privilege was granted not before the Augustan era. The first coins bearing *municip. Cascantum* (RPC 425-428) are dated to the reign of Tiberius (Amela Valverde 2002a, 202-203; cf. Villaronga 1979, 285-286).

The archaeological evidence from *Iluro* (present-day Mataró) and *Baetulo* (present-day Badalona) in modern Catalonia suggests that Pompey may have been responsible for their foundations (Amela Valverde 2001c, 39-

[9] Badian 1958, 311; Amela Valverde 2001c, 66. The foundation of this town is, however, usually linked with the activities of Caesar or Augustus (Hatt 1966, 80; Watkins 1979, 73; Rivet 1988, 75, 300).

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40; Amela Valverde 2002a, 206-207). A strong bond between the *Lacetani* or *Laietani* that inhabited the region and the *Pompei* that survived the death of Pompey the Great may be regarded as circumstantial evidence of Pompey's involvement in establishing both towns.

The analysis of numismatic material from *Saguntum* (*CNH* Arse-Saguntum 64-66 and 75) and its correlation with written sources suggests that the town could owe its status as a colony to Pompey. For example, there is a coin type dated to 50-30 bearing the legend AED.COL, probably referring to the office of the *aedilis coloniae*. Thanks to Cicero (*Balb*. 23) we know that at the time *Pro Balbo* was written the town had the status of *foederati*. On the other hand, in 4/3 it was granted the status of *municipium* by Augustus. Therefore, it had to be a colony there between the two dates. Although it is possible that *Saguntum* received it during Pompey's Spanish governorship in the 50s (Amela Valverde 2002a, 207-208), it seems most likely that it happened during the governorship of M. Aemilius Lepidus. Lepidus is known for establishing another Roman colony in Spain – *Colonia Lepida Celsa* (Amela Valverde 2002b, 11).

Based on the analysis of numismatic and epigraphic material, Abascal (2002, 28-32) deduced that Pompey could have also founded a colony in *Carthago Nova* in *c*. 54. According to this scholar, local coins (*CNH* 4-5; RPC 149) bearing the legend C•M IMP refer to the general and were minted in 49. The presence of the name Sabinus on the coins, however, raises doubts about this interpretation. The same name appears on the coins of Pompey the Younger minted in 47-46. This suggests that the local coins were minted at the same time and that Pompey the Younger was the founder of the colony (Amela Valverde 2002a, 208-209).

Pompey's city-founding activity in the 70s was not limited to Spain. The general created at least one town in Transalpine Gaul, *Lugdunum Converanum* (present-day Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges). It was probably founded on the site of a native oppidum at the foot of the Pyrenees on the Garonne (Ebel 1975, 369; Rivet 1988, 60-61; Beltrán Lloris and Pina Polo 1994, 114-115; Amela Valverde 2001c, 20-30, 34-35, 37; Amela Valverde 2002a: 171-173). It is possible that Pompey founded another town in the same province (Ebel 1975, 369). The evidence, however, is not conclusive.

Pompey was also very active as a city founder during the war with Mithridates and just after its end (Pl. 2: 2). In addition, the evidence confirming several of his foundations in Asia Minor is much stronger than in the case of his potential Spanish foundations. Strabo (12.3.28-31) lists seven cities, and Dio Cassius (37.20.2) eight, established by Pompey

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in Pontus. Most of them were created inland. Before the war these territories of the Pontic kingdom were administrated by a network of royal domains and sanctuaries (Esch 2011, 58-59). By founding cities Pompey wanted to reorganize the administration and make it more Greek-like. This, in turn, facilitated Roman administrative supervision.

At the place of the royal city of Eupatoria, which was supposed to be Mithirdates' showcase, Pompey established *Magnopolis* (present-day Kızılçubuk) (Strab. 12.3.30). *Diospolis* (present-day Niksar), was founded at the site of a royal stronghold (Plut. *Vit.Luc*. 15-17) or a palace (Strab. 12.3.30) called *Kabeira*. *Zela* (present-day Zile) (Strab. 12.3.37) was created in the territory of the sanctuary of Anaïtis, one of the most important local deities. The last city founded by Pompey in Pontus was *Megapolis* (Strab. 12.3.37). This city is identified with later *Sebasteia* (present-day Sivas) or *Karana-Sebastopolis* (present-day Sulusaray) (cf. Olshausen and Biller 1984, 143, 163-164). In addition, at the site of the final battle between the Romans and Mithridates located on the border between Pontus and Armenia Minor, Pompey created the city of *Nikopolis* (present-day Yeşilyayla) (Strab. 12.3.28; App. *Mith*. 105.115; Dio Cass. 36.50.3; Oros. 6.4.7). Pompey's founding activity in the East was not limited to Pontus. He also created two cities in northern Paphlagonia: *Pompeiopolis* (present-day Taşköprü) (Strab. 12.3.40) and *Neapolis* (present-day Vezirköprü) (Strab. 12.3.38). It is important to note that *Nikopolis*, *Diospolis*, *Magnopolis*, *Neapolis* and *Pompeiopolis* were located on a trade route between Bithynia and Armenia (Magie 1950, 370).

In all of these cities Pompey settled local people and Greeks living mostly in Mithridates' strongholds and palaces as well as veterans (Dio Cass. 36.50.3; Oros. 6.4). The largest number of veterans was settled in *Nikopolis* on the border. They were intended to provide additional protection of the border (Esch 2011, 41).

Pompey was also active in Cilicia. During his campaign against pirates he found many cities ruined and abandoned. After the war he decided to settle 20,000 captured pirates to repopulate Cilician cities (Strab. 8.7.5; Plut. *Vit.Pomp*. 28.2-4; App. *Mith*. 96.444): *Mallos* (present-day Kızıltahta), Adana, *Epiphaneia* (present-day Gözene) and *Soloi-Pompeiopolis* (present-day Mezitli-Viranşehir) (Strabo. 14.3.3; App. *Mith*. 115.562; Cass.Dio. 36.37.5-6; Plut. *Pomp*. 28.4). Despite opinions expressed in written sources that Pompey wanted to deprive the ex-pirates of a direct link with the sea, most of these cities were located by the sea and those that were not had river connections and/or harbours on the coast (Esch 2011, 46-47). The choice of

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the cities covered by the settlement activity was dictated mostly by economic and military factors. They were intended to control this part of the coast that was crucial for both on- and offshore trade between the West and Syria (Breglia 1972, 366-377; Esch 2011, 47, n. 103). Six of Pompey's Cilician cities: *Soloi-Pompeiopolis*, *Adana*, *Mallos*, *Epiphaneia*, *Mopsuestia* and *Alexandria ad Issos* adopted a new era, called the Pompeian Era (Ziegler 1993, 203-219).

Discussion

All of the above evidence shows that Pompey meets all the conditions of being involved in the *imitatio Alexandri* set by Michel and Dreizehnter. Although some of the evidence is questionable, it is reasonable to assume that he was trying to present himself as the Roman Alexander. This, however, does not answer the question of when exactly Pompey engaged in *imitatio Alexandri*.

To answer this, we should also consider whether omitting the above would be testimony for *comparatio* rather than *imitatio Alexandri*. In written sources there are several passages describing Pompey's deeds which closely resemble those of Alexander. Plutarch's account (*Vit.Pomp*. 35.3-4) of the battle between Romans and Caucasian Albanians that took place by the River Abas is one of the more interesting. According to the Greek writer the Romans found at the battlefield shields and footwear characteristic of Amazons, although no female bodies were found. Appian (*Mith*. 103.482-483) wrote, in turn, that there had been a lot of women, considered to be Amazons, among the prisoners of war captured during the campaign. In his summary of Pompey's Caucasian campaign, Plutarch (*Vit.Pomp*. 34.5) concluded that the general had surpassed the accomplishments of Alexander, who had never subdued tribes living there. He even fought a successful duel with Koisis, the brother of Albanian King Oroises (Plut. *Vit.Pomp*. 35.2). Since we have no record of Pompey's *spolia opima*, the authenticity of this story seems doubtful. Pompey would not pass up the opportunity to apply for the extraordinary honour of sacrificing spoils stripped from the defeated enemy. It is worth mentioning that this is not the first such heroic act attributed to the general by Plutarch. During the civil war in Italy, Pompey as a cavalry commander charged the soldiers of Lucius Iunius Brutus Damasippus. In Plutarch's own words (*Vit.Pomp*. 7.2): '*When from the enemy's side also the Celtic horsemen rode out against him, he promptly closed with the foremost and sturdiest of them, smote him with his spear, and brought*

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him down. Then the rest turned and fled and threw their infantry also into confusion, so that there was a general rout.'.[10] It should be noted that Pompey did not defeat just any opponent but '*the foremost and sturdiest of them*', a testimony to his unique *virtus*. Appian (*Mith*. 106.497) told a similar story to that of Plutarch's regarding the defeat of Koisis. According to him Pompey fought a king named Darius, as Alexander did. Moreover, Plutarch's short introduction to the conquest of Syria brings Alexander's deeds to mind (Kühnen 2008, 65). According to ancient sources, Pompey even treated Mithridates' concubines the same way Alexander did the wives of Darius (Plut. *Vit.Pomp*. 36.2; cf. Kühnen 2008, 65). A fragment from Pliny's *Historia naturalis* serves as the best summary: '(…) *the splendour of his exploits having equalled not only that of those of Alexander the Great, but even of Hercules, and perhaps of Father Liber even*'.[11]

This similarity between the deeds of Alexander and Pompey, especially evident for the time of Pompey's eastern campaign, comes as no surprise. Not only did theatre of war make it obvious, but also the conjecture that Plutarch and other ancient writers based their narratives of Pompey on the lost biography written by Theophanes of Mytilene, the general's friend and advisor. It is, therefore, very likely that it was Theophanes who started Pompey's *imitatio Alexandri* as a part of a propaganda effort to win over the newly conquered and subjected people and create a personal patron-client link between them and the general.

But did Pompey engage in *imitatio Alexandri* before his eastern campaign? To find an answer to this question we must go back to the time when the Senate and the Roman People entrusted the task of defeating Mithridates to Pompey. The legislative initiative was put forward in 66 by one of the *tribuni plebis*, Caius Manilius. Cicero, among others, backed the law with his first political speech, known as *Pro Lege Manilia* or *De Imperio Cn. Pompei*. The speech, which has fortunately survived to this date, is one of the best sources in enabling us to reconstruct Pompey's personal branding activities at that time.[12] In his speech Cicero listed all of Pompey's war victories, giving us six (Cic. *Man*. 10.28) or even seven

[10] Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives*, vol. V, trans. B. Perrin, Harvard 1917.

[11] Plin. *HN.* 7.26.95: '*Verum ad decus imperii Romani, non solum ad viri unius, pertinet victoriarum Pompei Magni titulos omnes triumphosque hoc in loco nuncupari, aequato non modo Alexandri Magni rerum fulgore, sed etiam Herculis prope ac Liberi patris*.' Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, trans. J. Bostock and H. T. Riley, London 1855.

[12] At the same time it's one of the best interpretations of Cicero's vision of the theology of victory and his understanding of the role of *princeps senatus* (cf. Kopij 2017, 71-73).

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(Cic. *Man*. 11-12) of them: Italian (i.e. Sulla's second civil war), Sicilian, African (these two being the continuation of the first one), Transalpine, Spanish, servile war (i.e. the war with Spartacus), and naval war (the war against pirates). Cicero briefly reminded his audience of the course of each of these wars and emphasized Pompey's stunning successes. All this led to the presentation of Pompey as the most eminent commander in Roman history (Cic. *Man*. 10.27-28). In addition to his extraordinary achievements Cicero also praises Pompey's virtues: '(…) *the divine wisdom and extraordinary valour* (Cic. *Man.* 4.10), *a man of such moderation, such mildness, such humanity* (Cic. *Man*. 5.13), *knowledge of military affairs, valour, authority and good fortune* (Cic. *Man*. 10.27), *industry in business, fortitude amid dangers, energy in acting, rapidity in executing, wisdom in foreseeing* (Cic. *Man*. 11.29), *the incorruptibility of generals! How great should be their moderation in everything! How perfect their good faith! How universal should be their affability! how brilliant their genius! how tender their humanity!* (Cic. *Man*. 13.36)'.[13]

All these qualities of Pompey would not, however, translate into success without the tender care of *Felicitas* or *Fortuna*. Giving back voice to Cicero: '*For my judgement is this, that very often commands have been conferred upon, and armies have been entrusted to Maximus, to Marcellus, to Scipio, to Marius, and to other great generals, not only on account of their valour, but also on account of their good fortune. For there has been, in truth, in the case of some most illustrious men, good fortune added as some contribution of the gods to their honour and glory, and as a means of performing mighty achievements.* (...) *I will only say this, most briefly, —that no one has ever been so impudent as to dare in silence to wish for so many and such great favours as the immortal gods have showered upon Cnaeus Pompeius* (Cic. *Man*. 16.47-48).[14] Cicero did not mention Alexander the Great, confining his list to the greatest Roman generals in history. Nonetheless if we speak of Fortune (or Tyche to be more precise) the Macedonian king comes to mind somewhat automatically. Not coincidentally, Plutarch opened his *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander* with these words: '*This is Fortune's discourse, who declares that Alexander is her own characteristic handiwork, and hers alone*' (Plut.

[13] M. Tullius Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, trans. Ch. D. Yonge, London 1856.

[14] M. Tullius Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, trans. Ch. D. Yonge, London 1856.

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Mor. 326D).[15] However, it has to be stressed that in the end Plutarch gave priority to Alexander's virtue (cf. Stewart 1993, 17-19). Nonetheless, Alexander became associated with Tyche right after his death in both in political (Stewart 1993, 260-261) and philosophical contexts (Stewart 1993, 10-21).

As we can see, in his speech Cicero also referred to Fortuna/Felicitas.[16] Moreover, he stressed the young age at which Pompey answered the call of the fatherland '*at a most critical time of the republic*' (Cic. *Man.* 27.61).[17] Pompey's young age may have been reminiscent of Alexander the Great. Nonetheless, the name of the king is never mentioned. Was it only the result of ambiguity of Alexander's image in Rome and therefore an unwillingness to arouse any controversy, or the fact that Pompey had not been engaged in *imitatio Alexandri* at this point in his career? *De imperio Cn. Pompei* is the first testimony to the new theme in Pompey's propaganda: the link between his own successes and the condition of the whole state (Kopij 2017, 276-277) fully exploited in the 50s and 40s (Kopij 2017, 326-328). It is, then, possible that *imitatio Alexandri* was proposed as an eastern counterpart of this *princeps senatus* theme exploited in Rome. It was definitely more compelling to the Hellenized inhabitants of the theatre of Pompey's eastern campaign – especially when we take into account that he defeated another imitator of Alexander – but at the same time similar in essence. It is highly probable that the coherent picture of Pompey's *imitatio Alexandri* presented in Theophanes' biography was a source of information for later writers.

Conclusion

All this evidence shows that Pompey was indeed involved in *imitatio Alexandri*. He wanted to be seen as a conqueror who had reached the borders of *oikumene* (Kühnen 2008, 72; cf. Diod. 40.4). However, two issues remain controversial: first, when exactly did he start to imitate Alexander? and second, was his image as the Roman Alexander public-oriented or was it limited only to the inhabitants of the East? As for the former there are two possibilities. Either Pompey started to imitate Alexander at the beginning

[15] Plutarch, *Moralia* vol. IV, trans. F. C. Babbitt. Harvard 1936.

[16] 16 Later Pompey included an altar or a shrine of *Felicitas* in his theatre complex (CIL I.244; CIL I.277; more with additional bibliography, cf. Kopij 2010, 168, 170-171) stressing his affection for the goddess.

[17] M. Tullius Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, trans. Ch. D. Yonge, London 1856.

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of his political career in the 80s, or only during his eastern campaigns. Both Plutarch and Sallust argue that the general had looked up to Alexander since his youth. However, Plutarch is not reliable in terms of references to the Macedonian, since in his writings he used him as a point of reference. Although Sallust, as a contemporary, seems more trustworthy, he tended to mix chronologies. Furthermore, being a partisan of the Caesar, he was unfavourably disposed towards Pompey. This could have resulted in attempts to ridicule the general.

Although it may be true that Pompey as a young man tried to model himself after Alexander and, when he realised that it was bringing more harm than good, abandoned this image, there is no doubt that he fully engaged in *imitatio Alexandri* only after sailing East to fight the pirates and then Mithridates. We have to keep in mind that the Romans had an ambiguous picture of Alexander, therefore showing oneself as his Roman 'embodiment' could be met with accusations of the pursuit of autocracy. Pompey could not afford this, especially in the 70s, when he repeatedly used 'unconstitutional' means to reach his goals, which met with the disapproval of the senators. In the East, however, the Macedonian king was still a point of reference both for the inhabitants and local rulers. Mithridates was the most recent example of this (Kühnen 2008, 63). References to Alexander were not only beneficial, but in some cases necessary. Theophanes did not as much create Pompey's image as the Roman Alexander, as he used the existing tendencies of the natives to compare the strongest king or general to the Macedonian. Pompey did not oppose this. On the contrary, he encouraged it. However, he probably wanted to limit it to the East as much as possible, in order to avoid being ridiculed or seen as a tyrant with ambitions to be king of the Romans.

Abbreviations

CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*

CNH = Villaronga L. 1994. *Corpus nummum Hispaniae ante Augusti aetatem*. Madrid.

RPC = **Burnett A., Amandry M. and Ripollès P. P. (eds.). 1992.** *Roman Provincial Coinage*. vol. 1: *From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 BC – AD 69)*. London, Paris.

RRC = Crawford M. H. 1974. *Roman Republican Coinage*. Cambridge, [on-line] https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511584015.

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Pl. 1: 1 – Pompey the Great, marble, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Kopenhagen, Inv. No. 733, photo Gunnar Bach Pedersen, Public Domain

Pl. 1: 2 – Alexander the Great, marble, The British Musuem, London, Reg. No. 1872,0515.1 ©The Trustees of the British Museum

Pl. 1: 3 – Pompey the Great, intaglio, Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, Inv. No. FG6536, with permission from the Museum

Pl. 1: 4 – Aureus of Pompey the Great (RRC 402), The British Musuem, London, Reg. No. 1867,0101.584, ©The Trustees of the British Museum

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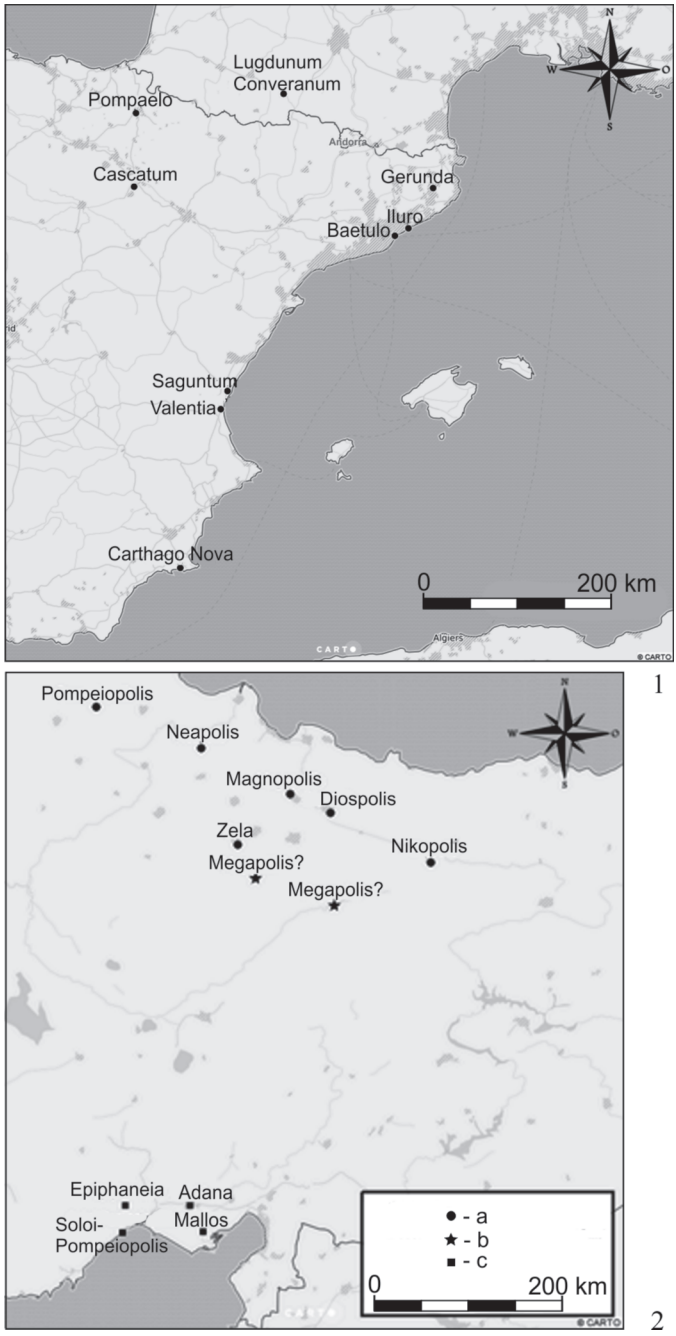

Pl. 2: 1 – Map of towns founded by Pompey and his possible foundations in Spain and Gaul
Pl. 2: 2 – Map of towns founded by Pompey in Asia Minor: a – cities founded by Pompey; b – possible locations of Megapolis; c – 'Pirate' cities of Pompey

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